

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LISBON 04088 211138Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 IO-10 SAJ-01 /064 W

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O R 211100Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3473

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 518

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L 4088

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PO

SUBJ: ASSESSMENT OF ATTEMPT TO REMOVE PRIME MINISTER

REF: A. LISBON 4080; B. PRESIDENT'S JULY 19 COMMUNIQUE, FBIS
LONDON 2002151

1. AT THE JULY 19 MEETING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (RC)
EITHER NO ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO REMOVE THE PRIME MINISTER OR THE
ATTEMPT FAILED. THE RC COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENT
FOLLOWING THE MEETING IS SUBJECT TO VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS,
BUT MAKES NO MENTION OF THE PRIME MINISTER. WHAT HAPPENED DURING
THE MEETING IS BEING CLOSELY HELD AND IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO
GATHER INFORMATION ON A SUNDAY WITHOUT SEEMING TO BE
INVOLVED. IT MAY TAKE A DAY OR TWO BEFORE WE CAN PIECE
TOGETHER AN ACCURATE PICTURE.

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2. IN REF A, EMBASSY REPORTED SEVERAL POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

BEING CONSIDERED BY ANTI-GONCALVES RC MEMBERS TO ENGINEER THE OUSTER OF THE PM. SCENARIO (A), A DIRECT VOTE IN THE JULY 19 MEETING, IS NOW SCRUBBED. SCENARIO (B), TO FORCE THE PM OUT AFTER HE FAILS TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT, MAY BE UNDERWAY IN THE VIEW OF SOME OBSERVERS AFTER READING THE PRESIDENT'S CAREFULLY WORDED COMMUNIQUE (REF B). THEY NOTE THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL BE IN "KEEPING WITH THE POPULAR WILL ALREADY EXPRESSED BY VARIOUS MEANS" AND "IT IS NECESSARY THAT SOCIALIST CURRENTS OF POLITICAL THOUGHT BE REPRESENTED IN IT." THESE OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT THE PRESIDENT IS SAYING THAT THE SOCIALIST PARTY MUST HAVE ROLE IN THE GOVERNMENT. AT THE SAME TIME, EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT THE PS WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN A GOVERNMENT LED BY GONCALVES. LESS OPTIMISTIC READING OF STATEMENT COULD BE THAT HE IS SUPPORTING GONCALVES AND ISSUING ULTIMATUM TO PARTIES TO JOIN IN.

3. WE NOTE ALSO THAT COPCON HEAD OTELO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO DEPARTED FOR CUBA TODAY. THIS FITS INTO SCENARIO WHERE OTELO, ANXIOUS TO GET RID OF PM BUT WISHING TO AVOID PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS, ABSENTS HIMSELF FROM SCENE AFTER ENSURING THAT COPCON WILL SUPPORT OUSTER. ONE VERSION HAS IT THAT OTELO IS TO BE REWARDED WITH POST OF ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF, A POSITION NOW HELD CONCURRENTLY WITH THE PRESIDENCY BY COSTA GOMES.

4. COMMENT: STRATEGY OF THE ANTI-GONCALVES GROUP, WHILE CREDIBLE, IS LIKELY TO MEET WITH THE DETERMINED OPPOSITION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, THE FIFTH DIVISION, AND THE MEDIA. ALSO STILL A QUESTION MARK, IN MY PERSONAL JUDGEMENT, IS THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT, WHO SAYS HE KNOWS THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW, BUT COULD STILL SHY AWAY FROM ANY CONFRONTATION. IN SUM, WE LACK HARD INFORMATION, BUT VISIBLE SIGNS INDICATE CAMPAIGN STILL UNDERWAY ALTHOUGH IT PROBABLY DID NOT REACH CRISIS ON SATURDAY. WHILE THIS IS MOST LIKELY A SETBACK FOR ANTI-GONCALVES FORCES, THEY STILL HAVE OTHER CARDS TO PLAY.
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